

Give your child juice only at mealtimes and not throughout the day.

The trick to fighting decay is giving your children healthy meals and snacks as well as teaching them healthy habits.

Make brushing fun for your children and be enthusiastic, it is contagious!

Remember to be a good example for your children because they learn good dental habits from you.

**More Information:**

If you want to know more about keeping your child's teeth healthy, contact the:

Office of Oral Health  
Family Health Administration  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene  
201 West Preston Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-767-5300

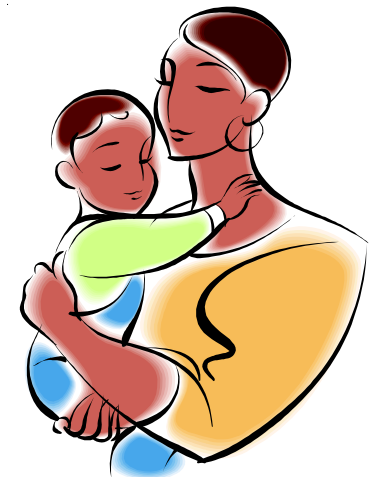
[www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth](http://www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth)  
e-mail: [oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us](mailto:oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us)



The services and facilities of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) are operated on a non-discriminatory basis. This policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin and applies to the provisions of employment and granting of advantages, privileges, and accommodations.

The Department, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, ensures that qualified individuals with disabilities are given an opportunity to participate in and benefit from DHMH services, programs, benefits, and employment opportunities.

# Oral Health Tips for Your Child



Some healthy tips from your  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene



Martin O'Malley, Governor  
Anthony G. Brown, Lieutenant Governor  
John M. Colmers, Secretary

## In the Beginning

Before babies are born, they have 20 baby (primary) teeth below the gums. These teeth develop during the fourth month of pregnancy.

At about 6 months of age, your baby's first teeth will begin to push through the gums.

It is common for babies to drool and cry more when their teeth begin to erupt.



## The Importance of Primary Teeth

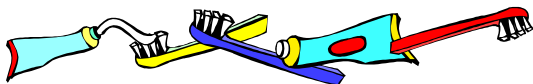
Primary teeth help a child learn how to speak properly.

Primary teeth help to build a child's self esteem.

These teeth make sure there is enough room in your child's mouth for permanent teeth.

Primary teeth are important for feeding and good nutrition in children.

Tooth decay in primary teeth can cause infection and pain. It can lead to the early loss of primary teeth and may also damage permanent teeth.



## How to Prevent Tooth Decay

### *For infants and toddlers...*

Starting the first few days after birth, take a wet cloth and gently wipe it over your baby's gums after each feeding.

Never give your baby a pacifier dipped in soda or other sugary liquids (like juice or honey).

If you must put your baby to bed with a bottle, make sure it is only filled with water.

Use a cotton swab or clean wash cloth to clean your baby's teeth daily to remove any plaque.

Avoid sharing silverware or chewing food for your baby. Bacteria that live in your mouth can cause tooth decay in your baby's mouth.

### *For school-aged children...*

Until your child is 6 or 7 years old, an adult should help your child brush and floss their teeth.

Only use half a pea-sized amount (a smear) of fluoridated toothpaste on your child's toothbrush. Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste instead of swallowing it.

Once your child's permanent teeth come in, ask your dentist about dental sealants. Dental sealants are protective plastic coatings that prevent food from settling in the grooves of teeth and causing decay.